

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



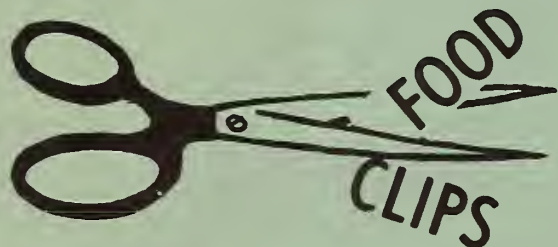
Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION WASHINGTON, D. C.

33rd Year

January 19, 1976

NO. 3



In This Issue:

- 1 - On Red Meat Consumption
- 2 ✓ "Poison Fungi Center"
- 3 - Plans Slated in Maryland
- 4 ✓ By USDA/ARS

"Light meat" tuna costs less than "white meat" tuna. In descending order of price, packs are fancy or solid, chunks and flaked or grated. In making salads or creamed tuna, or even casserole dishes, it's important to remember that you usually use tuna in small pieces — so you don't need the solid pack, according to USDA home economists.

* * *

For combination dishes and baked foods where the appearance of an egg is not important — use Grade B eggs...they're cheaper. Grade A refers to appearance, not wholesomeness.

* * *

Use less tender, less expensive meats and cook slowly with moisture, pot roasting, braising, simmer and stew. It cuts down on shrinkage and is more economical. You can serve more people by adding mild-flavored foods, such as dry beans or peas, macaroni products, rice or potatoes — to casseroles, stews or soup.

For your files — Please note: This is the 33rd year of publication for Food and Home Notes. Disregard the "Vol. 34" as indicated in January 5th and January 12th issues.

ON RED MEAT

—WE'RE EATING LESS

Consumers ate less red meat last year, despite record high beef and the highest veal consumption in a decade! The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that per capita beef consumption in 1975 reached 120.1 pounds... topping the previous high of 116.8 pounds per consumer in 1974. And, consumption of veal averaged 4.1 pounds... which is up from 2.3 pounds in 1974.

But — over-all consumption of red meat — beef, veal, lamb, mutton and pork averaged only 180.7 pounds... and that's the lowest it's been since 1967.

What is the reason for this decline? Sharply lower pork consumption — and continued lower consumption of lamb and mutton.

Pork consumption last year dropped to 54.4 pounds, down 20% from a year earlier. That's also a record. In fact, it's the lowest total since 1935 — and the second lowest on USDA records that go back to 1909!

WATCH FOR...THE NEWS FEATURE
coming January 26, 1976

THERE ARE MUSHROOMS

...AND OTHER MUSHROOMS

— AND THERE'S A DIFFERENCE!



THE NATIONAL FUNGUS COLLECTIONS

The National Fungus Collections located at the USDA's Agricultural Research Center -West, Beltsville, Maryland has over 850,000 mycological herbarium specimens and probably is the largest and oldest collection in this country — and quite possibly the world. The collection is a combination of specimens from the Smithsonian Institution, Museum of Natural History and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

USDA mycologists, in addition to their basic research, are constantly expanding the Fungus Collections and making information files up-to-date in order to provide taxomic information to the general public. The reference literature, also housed in the same place, ranks among the best in the world according to Dr. Paul Lentz, Chief of the Mycology Laboratory for USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

THE NEED TO IDENTIFY ——— POISONOUS FUNGI

What do you do when little Johnny eats a mushroom-like plant in the backyard — and shortly after gets intense stomach cramps? Off to the hospital, of course, but, likely as not, the facilities of the hospital cannot determine what kind of fungi the culprit was...and it's not an easy task to work with an unknown poison.

But — there are any number of "mushroom-like" plants around the country — looking beautiful in their environment and looking harmless to the onlooker. Poisonous fungi and their toxic effects need to be explored so that when an emergency (such as with "little Johnny") occurs, there will be answers to the dilemma.

A "Poison Fungi Center" - a coordinating center for the country - is being organized at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Research Center (Beltsville, Maryland) to help with this kind of problem. A manual is being prepared on poisonous mushrooms containing complete descriptions — appearance of fungi, habitat, their toxic effects to man and symptoms of such poison. The project, or manual, will appeal to the novice, the layman, but also will offer technical information so that the medical profession can have it for reference, according to Dr. David Farr, Agricultural Research Botanist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Dr. Farr's interest in poisonous mushrooms began when he was studying forestry in California. He later became more interested in small fungi when he was studying under Dr. O.K. Miller Jr., one of his professors who wrote a book called "Mushrooms of North America" and at one time, worked in Forest Pathology for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Most deaths from poisonous fungi occur from one kind of mushroom — a very pretty species — called "Death Angel".

More

THE NEED TO IDENTIFY

—— POISONOUS FUNGI (CON'T)

If more information was readily available to the general public about the mushrooms NOT to eat, Dr. Farr believes there would be fewer problems and less victims — usually children. Increased concern about poison fungi is partly due to the revived interest in outdoor living, and, of young people, who during the last decade have moved to rural areas to often "live off the land".

An International Mycological Congress is planned for the summer of 1977 in Tampa, Florida, and it is hoped that the Coordinating Poison Fungi Center will be in total operation by that time, along with the descriptive book of poisonous fungi. USDA's Agricultural Research Service is sponsoring a symposium on poisonous mushrooms during the Congress.

Another important aspect of the interest in mushroom identification is the increased incidence of hallucinatory reactions to some fungi which means that mycologists often assist Drug Enforcement units. The Coordinating Center could offer immediate identification to such problems from poisonous fungi.

Dr. Paul Lentz, Mycology Laboratory Chief of ARS, says fungus identification is very important to the field of agriculture because fungi account for over 20,000 plant diseases in the United States.

Looking to the future, Dr. Farr believes the new coordinating center will be useful to identify fungi whether or not it is toxic. According to Dr. Farr, the center may eventually provide a 24 hour service to identify fungi for hospitals, poison centers, and physicians attending to cases of mushroom poisoning.

FOOD and HOME NOTES is a weekly newsletter published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Communication, Press Division, Washington, D.C. 20250
—— Editor: Shirley Wagener.....Telephone 202-447-5898.